

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It was estimated that approximately 12,000 native species supposed to be found in Thailand (ประนอม จันทโรณทัย และ ก่องกานดา ชยามฤต. 2543). Many plant taxonomists both locals and foreigners have been trying to survey and collect data on plant diversity in Thailand for decades (Larsen, 1979). However, it is not fulfilled yet. Only 35 percent of estimated species was published. Moreover, during the last five decades, many forest areas in Thailand have been rapidly destroyed. It was estimated that only 25 percent of Thai forests remains (กรมป่าไม้. 2537). Thus, taxonomic survey is urgently needed for gathering all data on plant diversification which is important for strategic planning in conservation of plant and natural resources of Thailand in the future.

Pha Taem has been established to be the 74th National Park in 1991. It locates in Ubon Ratchathani province, the eastern floristic regions of Thailand, and very closed to Laos (Smitinand, 2001). As a number of both new and new recorded species were reported from Ubon Ratchathani during the last decade (Sirirugsa, 1989, Chuakul, 1998, 1999, and Suddee, 2001) and there is no taxonomic survey in this national park before, thus it is very interesting to explore its plant diversity of this area. The data collected will be on one hand useful for biodiversity conservation and on the other hand may benefit for the Flora of Thailand project.

Object of the present study

To collect specimens and data of flowering plant diversity at Pha Taem National Park, Ubon Ratchathani Province.